

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2024

Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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### 1.0 **Purpose of Report**

This report is presented as a 6-month update to the work of the Operational Policing Command.

### 2.0 **Recommendations**

The board is invited to note the contents of this report.

### 3.0 **Executive Summary**

- 3.1. This report sets out Operational Policing Command's performance over the last 6 months and highlights the linked issues, risks and opportunities.

- 3.2. The command continues to work hard to develop and improve its perceived and experienced culture, with progress on the Professionalism, Trust and Confidence Plan that has seen new roles created and a re-constituted governance board that drives activity around Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, and Professionalism.
- 3.3. Performance continues to be strong, with a clear and significant contribution to the Force Plan, not least in relation to the force's high harm focus under Operation Nightshade. The Operational Support Group (OSG) has made a total of 832 arrests over the 6-month reporting period, 248 of which relate to Operation Nightshade. The Force Support Unit continues to deliver against Operation Grip hotspot patrols, with 1457 deployments and associated activity across the reporting period. The Serious Violence Unit's focus on middle and upper level drug dealers has been evaluated and shows that 80% of offenders it has dealt with have one or more of the persistent or prolific high harm indicators, suggesting the team's focus is rightly on those who present the greatest risk to our communities.
- 3.4. The number of people killed or seriously injured remains above the target line for reducing death and serious injuries by 50% ahead of 2030, but Roads Policing continues to lead on 'Activity A' enforcement operations and work alongside SERP to deliver 'Activity B'.
- 3.5. Over the reporting period, the Operational Planning team and RMU have ensured that mutual aid requests are fulfilled, that operations are resourced and that duties are effectively managed. A Continuous Improvement Team review has identified opportunities for improvement to RMU working practices, several of which, including devolving some leave authorisations, have been implemented and well received across the force.
- 3.6. The command faces challenges in relation to training and retention of some specialist public order skills, but has plans and mitigations in place to improve over the next period. The command has also identified challenges in relation to reductions in funding for the Serious Violence Unit; timely recruitment and IT support to roads policing processing teams; suitability of vehicles; further increases in demand for dangerous dog kennelling and associated costs; and challenges faced by the impending road improvements on the A12.
- 3.7. The reporting period has seen the policing impact of a murder charge for the officer involved in the shooting of Chris Kaba in London, with significant repercussions for recruitment and retention of firearms officers. Challenges in recruitment to the FSU and National Firearms Instructor roles remain.
- 3.8. Looking ahead, the command has plans in place to implement the new Code of Ethics, to introduce the new approach to road policing operations – including application of 'clear, hold, build' principles – and the roll out of the Knife Crime Violence Model to Southend.

#### **4.0 Introduction/Background**

- 4.1. The Operational Policing Command (OPC) provides a range of specialist capabilities and support services to Essex Police, this paper gives a 6-month update to the work ongoing within the command.
- 4.2. The OPC ambition is that we are a command:
  - That provides well-trained, well-equipped expert and specialist capabilities that make a clear and indispensable contribution to the force plan.
  - That thinks ahead and puts the force in the best place to meet current and future operational threats.
  - Where people are professional, proud to serve and where they feel valued and respected.
  - That's attractive and accessible to all, that influences and inspires those we work with and that is recognised nationally as a centre of innovation, excellence and best practice.
- 4.3. This paper assumes an understanding of the basic structure of the command and functions therein. The paper focusses on the facets of the command where there has been a change to the demand, performance, operating context, resourcing or risks in the last 6 months, rather than list everything being done, or planned, in every team, in duplication of our annual report and other reports presented to the board. As a result, not all functions within OPC will be represented in every section of this report.
- 4.4. Data in this report is presented for the reporting period of 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, unless otherwise stated.

#### **5.0 Current Work and Performance**

##### **Professionalism Trust and Confidence**

- 5.1. The findings of Dame Casey's report led to the command's Professionalism, Trust and Confidence plan. The command management team remains focussed on developing and improving the culture and professionalism within OPC.
- 5.2. In the last 6 months, the command has refreshed the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Board, re-constituting as the Culture, Engagement and Inclusion Group (CEIG). Each agenda features a guest speaker from a support network, a subject matter expert or someone else who is able to talk to matters relating to our culture and inclusion.
- 5.3. The command has launched 'Team Advocates' across all functions, requiring each team to nominate an individual from within their number who can both advocate for their team's views and take away updates, learning and messages for dissemination to their peers. The Team Advocates are asked to attend the CEIG meetings, and each meeting affords the opportunity for Advocates to provoke and/or participate in discussions. This has created an additional opportunity for engagement across ranks and roles.

- 5.4. The command has introduced 'Command Team allies' where each Command Management Team member is assigned/has volunteered to be an ally for a different staff network. The allies are expected to engage with the network, to promote their work and facilitate access to the command and provide updates into the CEIG.
- 5.5. The CEIG also monitors progress against our DE&I action plan and scrutinises the command's stop and search data to ensure that our use of that power and associated compliance with legislation and procedure is as it should be.
- 5.6. Training on dealing with grievances has been given at the OPC Leaders Forum and reporting on progress and learning from grievances is now a standing agenda item at Command Team meetings.
- 5.7. To mitigate against perceptions and experiences of 'specialist commands' OPC has additional governance for uniform requisition requests and sets clear expectations that wherever possible officers on the command will deploy with the same uniform and appearance as other officers across the force.
- 5.8. In the last 6 months the command has been working with Local Policing Areas to develop a memorandum of understanding that more clearly defines how prisoners arrested by OPC will be processed. This agreement helps to reduce conflict between officers on different commands and recognises the contributions each team makes to the Force Plan.

### **Serious Violence Unit**

- 5.9. The work conducted by the Serious Violence Unit (SVU) supports the Government's ten-year drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope.' Data shows the levels of activity associated with drug driven violence is either reduced or steady. There have been no County Lines related homicides since 2021. Knife crime (related to serious violence) and community violence are both gradually reducing, and the risk associated with County Lines is being managed well by the force.
- 5.10. At the end of 2023, the SVU undertook extensive evaluative work to understand the impact of their targeting of the 'middle' and 'upper' market within gangs and county lines. Although some of this data relates to 2022 and all of 2023, the evaluation has been a significant piece of work within the last few months to try to understand the impact of performance.
- 5.11. A total of 497 persons were arrested by SVU in the 12 months from January 2023 to December 2023. From the 497 offenders, 399 have one or more of the persistent or prolific high harm indicators (80%).
  - 192 offenders have been arrested or convicted for ABH offences, and 130 (68%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
  - 137 offenders have been arrested or convicted for GBH offences, and 123 (90%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
  - 218 offenders have been arrested or convicted for possession of offensive weapons, offences, and 149 (68%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.

- 56 offenders have been arrested or convicted for Sexual offences, and 46 (82%) have more than 2 HH indicators.
- 178 offenders have been arrested or convicted for possession of a knife or bladed article, and 140 (79%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
- 54 offenders have been arrested or convicted for possession of a firearm, and 45 (83%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
- 192 offenders have been arrested or convicted for Robbery, and 154 (80%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
- 88 offenders have been arrested or convicted for Affray offences, and 77 (88%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
- 29 offenders have been arrested for murder, and 23 (79%) have more than 2 other HH indicators.
- Of the 497 offenders, 284 (57%) have 2+ HH indicators; and 89 (18%) have 5+ HH indicators.

5.12. Performance of the SVU pursue teams (Op Raptor) continues to be strong. The data below shows the performance over the past few calendar years:

	2021	2022	2023
Total searches	408	417	350
Arrests	583	594	497
Charged and RIC	374	374	336
Weapons	134	127	92
Cash seized	£569,000	£554,000	£288,000
People safeguarded	97	58	393
Safeguarding referrals	81	61	202
NRM Referrals	37	39	79

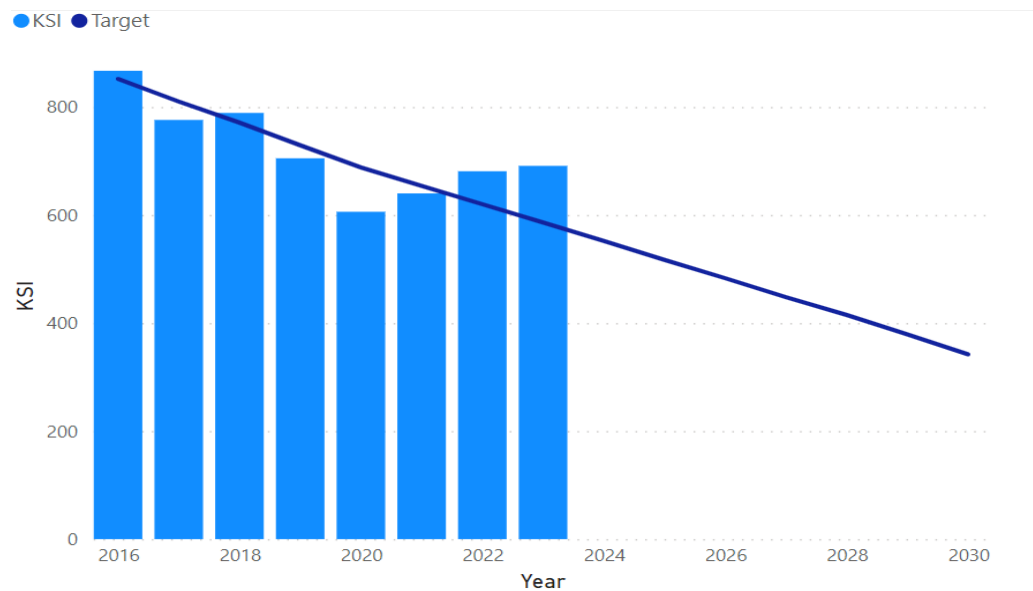
- 5.13. In the last 6 months, the National Crime Agency (NCA) instigated Project Housebuilder, the national response to drugs deaths connected with contaminated Heroin. Essex Police has had six such deaths and our investigative and partnership response was subsequently adopted as national best practice. This approach resulted in the arrest, charge and remand of key nominals connected to the supply of the contaminated Heroin. The Drug Liaison team led on the public health approach, engaging with partners to provide community messaging. In addition, the Drug Liaison Team have implemented measures to review and oversee every drug-related death in Essex, to ensure consistency and to identify themes or trends. This builds on the previous work with public health and the coroner service.
- 5.14. The Drug Liaison Team is the force's expert on drugs. They are all drugs expert witnesses and completed 89% of the whole force's demand for drug expert reports, from July to December 2023. The team has completed 314 of the 354 statements.
- 5.15. The SVU is also responsible for the management and delivery of Operation Grip, Essex Police's response to hotspot policing. With effect from 1 July 2023, there were 15 harm spots across Essex which were the focus of 15 or 30 minute patrols. While this strategy is not new, it has developed significantly, increasing our patrol compliance from around 40% in September 2022, to nearly 100% daily in December 2023. The Safe Space initiative was implemented in Southend in September 2023,

which saw the Op Grip team working with partners to provide a visible presence in areas of serious violence; this was well received by the public and has now been implemented across other areas of Essex.

- 5.16. The Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) manages all fatal road traffic collisions that occur within Essex, and those which result in serious life changing injuries. The team continues to perform to an excellent standard. The solved rate for the team's criminal investigations at the end of December 2023 was 95% for the year, and 100% for high harm investigations.

### Roads Policing

- 5.17. The number of people killed or seriously injured is not declining and remains above the target line for reducing death and serious injuries by 50% ahead of 2030, which in turn sets the trajectory for zero death and serious injury by 2040. Motorcyclists, young drivers, including passengers, and pedestrians remain the most at risk road user groups.



- 5.18. A further 6 Roads Policing officers have now qualified as Police motorcyclists, with access to a Police Motorcycle made available at both operational bases. These additional officers enhance our response to improving the safety of Powered Two Wheelers, which still equate to 24% of all recorded collisions resulting in death or serious injury.
- 5.19. Launched in June 2023, two members of police staff now provide dedicated enforcement of speed limits at traditional casualty / collision sites, plus community concern locations. Since July, a total of 107 sites have been visited, detecting 1,382 offences.
- 5.20. The Christmas drink and drug drive campaign resulted in 143 drivers arrested for drink driving, with a further 113 arrested for drug driving. Drug drive arrests for the final 3 months of year increased significantly and has continued into January.

- 5.21. The Strategic Policing Requirement sets out specialist skills required for the roles within Roads Policing, including commercial vehicles. As part of a programme to upskill officers and staff, over the last 6 months a cohort of Roads Policing officers has been equipped with additional commercial vehicle skills, to enhance our capacity and capability within this specialist area.
- 5.22. Since July, the Road Crime Team has been providing tactical support to Operation Ignition. This operation focuses upon Vehicle Crime, with an emphasis upon disrupting Organised Crime linked to the theft of vehicles across the force area. The Road Crime Team has made 67 arrests directly linked to Operation Ignition, performed 130 stop searches and contributed to 100 intelligence reports.

### **Operational Planning**

- 5.23. Essex Police responds to events and incidents where there is a risk of public disorder (both planned and spontaneous) through the assessment of intelligence and information to determine the most proportionate response. Between July 2023 and December 2023, Essex Police has had Public Order Public Safety command structures in place on a total of 51 occasions, broken down as below:
- 13 on-call structures.
  - 29 planned structures.
  - 9 instances of spontaneous structures
- 5.24. Deployments have covered a variety of events:
- Activity from Political protest – Op Tarlac.
  - VIP movements through the airport, ranging from state visits to visits by world leaders for the AI Conference in Bletchley Park – Op Valance.
  - Protest in relation to an immigration facility – Op Ivy.
  - Ministerial and Royal visits to Essex.
  - Risk of disorder surrounding Southend Seafront - Op Union.
  - Music festivals and events.
  - Sporting events including Ride London and football fixtures.
- 5.25. Essex Police trains officers in Public Order Public Safety (POPS) skills to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). The current levels of trained Public Order and Public Safety staff are determined through a Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA). At the time of writing the force has only one shortfall at command level (Silver), with an individual identified and attending a course in the next few months. At operational level the requirements are being met across 11 of the 14 specialisms. The force has a shortfall of 79 Level 3 trained officers, 27 Level 2 officers and 8 Police Liaison Team officers.
- 5.26. Essex Police has a SPR to provide 9 PSUs of L2 officers and 9 BDUs of L3 officers. Currently Essex is unable to meet the L3 requirement of officers due to staff movement and a number relinquishing the skill. A training plan is underway to ensure all CPT officers are trained to the L3 requirement, enabling us to meet our SPR.

- 5.27. L2 numbers have increased over the past 12 months. This is due to ongoing work to try to maintain these numbers and understand why officers hand back the skill, to improve retention. Essex has a significantly lower proportion of the force trained in L2 Public Order Public Safety tactics compared to other forces. The national average remains at 13.8% of the policing establishment trained. Essex still sits at around 8%.

### **Resource Management Unit (RMU)**

- 5.28. The department continues to provide duties planning for all officers and staff, plus abstractions for training purposes, on call rotas and operational needs. With an increase in the establishment of officers and staff across Essex Police, this has seen an increase in the volume of work conducted by the RMU. The number of SAP transactions remain at around 700,000 annually.
- 5.29. The RMU has benefited from some additional resources by way of restricted officers assisting the department. These have been used to increase the capacity available to RMU to book officers on personal safety training.
- 5.30. In the last 6 months, the establishment of RMU has been increased by 1x FTE, to give capacity for reallocation of hours owed from Bank Holiday working. This is one of a number of resource-intensive administrative tasks being carried out by RMU to address the allocation of hours owed.
- 5.31. A review of the department by the Continuous Change Team was concluded in July 2023, reporting on structure, processes and staffing. Some of the recommendations have now been agreed at the OPC Strategic Board and are in the process of being implemented. Many of the recommendations focus on more autonomy on supervisors to manage officers leave requests and duty changes. Early indications from the changes implemented to date (e.g. allowing supervisors greater autonomy over authorising leave for their officers/staff) have been positively received and have reduced the demand on RMU, allowing them to concentrate on course bookings and other areas that impact the operational capability of the force.

### **Resilience Department**

- 5.32. The team has responsibility to discharge the statutory obligations placed on Essex Police by The Civil Contingency Act (CCA) 2004 in terms of emergency and business continuity plans. Essex Police has a rolling schedule of plans to be tested which are conducted within approved timescales. There are currently 121 tracked emergency plans and 98 tracked business continuity plans which are accessible to all staff via the intranet.
- 5.33. The Resilience Department has tested both types of plans during this year; however capacity within the team meant that it was unable to adequately test and exercise the plans as required under the CCA. To address this a dedicated training, testing, and exercising officer was recruited and has been in post since April 2023. This role has mitigated the gap against the emergency plans and is also assisting with the business continuity plans.



- 5.34. The department is also now delivering both tactical and strategic command training to Essex Police Commanders.

### **Eastern Region Information & Coordination Centre (ERICC)**

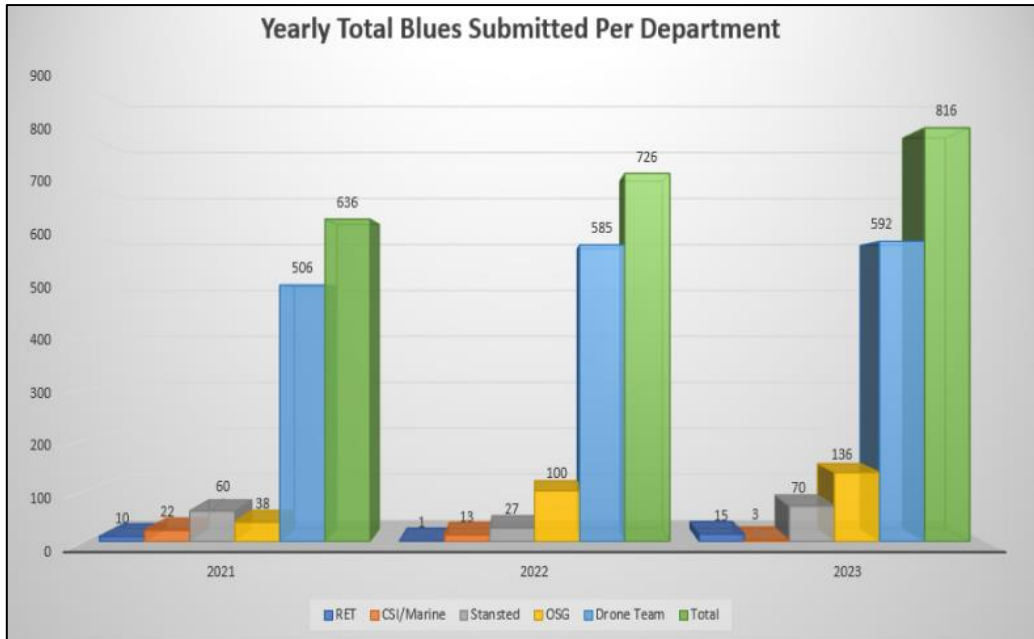
- 5.35. Essex Police provides two full time officers, funded equally by the six Eastern Region forces, to resource the Eastern Region Information & Coordination Centre and oversee and facilitate mutual aid requests within the region and nationally. Recent demand has been high due to the protests in London and various other large scale police resource requests such as the UK Government hosted International AI Conference. In the last 6 months, the force has mobilised 720 officers across 32 distinct skillsets in mutual aid to other forces.

### **CBRN**

- 5.36. The force continues to maintain a full CBRN Command cadre that currently sits at 3 Strategic, 5 Tactical and 4 Operational Commanders, with a further Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commander to come online in 24/25. Essex CBRN Commanders are supported by 6 nationally accredited CBRN Tactical Advisors, who continue to provide an on-call capability alongside, and in support of the duty officer cadre.
- 5.37. The specialist operations department is responsible for all CBRN training and over the past 6 months has been engaged in the delivery of refresher courses to all general, enhanced and firearms trained responders. Additional refresher training has been delivered to the Advanced CBRN responder cadre; working alongside Essex Fire, the department has delivered training that included the use of Specialist Breathing Apparatus and Gas Tight PPE.
- 5.38. In addition to CBRN training, the Specialist Operations department has also introduced a formal program of training and CPD for the 'working in confined spaces' team and delivered two upskill courses in the use of police breathing apparatus.

### **Drones**

- 5.39. The force retains 18 drone pilots (comprising of Drone Team – 2, OSG – 8, Stansted – 6, Rural Engagement Team – 2), operating a total of 9 drones.
- 5.40. Drone flights deployments have seen a noticeable increase over the past 3 years as the capabilities and potential utilisations of this equipment is better understood and appreciated by commanders and investigators. The below data is taken from the Risk Assessment ("Blues") submitted (note: this data includes training flights or patrols to maintain flight hours).



5.41. The force has developed a counter drone capability which has seen use at the King’s visit, Op Valance deployments (Tier 1 VIP movements at Stansted Airport) and the Clacton Air show. The force has 17 trained operators (Drone Team – 2, OSG – 2, Stansted – 13) and two Tactical Advisors.

**Marine**

5.42. Over the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the Marine section has patrolled for 1209hrs on the water, 1078hrs on the shore and undertaken 509hrs of training. It has attended 61 community engagement events and conducted 10 water searches/body recovery deployments. The team has run 89 Op Wave Breaker operations which has resulted in 47 jet skis being stopped, leading to 7 prosecutions and 32 warnings.

**Operational Support Group (OSG)**

- 5.43. Between July 2023 and December 2023, the OSG has made a total of 832 arrests, 248 of which relate to Operation Nightshade, the force’s high harm operation.
- 5.44. OSG has supported the LPAs by executing 157 warrants with specialist intermediate method of entry for various Drugs and Section 8 warrants.
- 5.45. The team has submitted 682 PIRs as well as completing 300 Section 165 vehicle seizures.
- 5.46. The OSG has assisted the Mental Health Teams across Essex with 60x Section 135 Mental Health Act warrants, which supports the LPAs, the health trusts and most importantly the vulnerable individuals who need support at their time of crisis.
- 5.47. The team has carried out 586 Stop and Searches, 228 of which had positive outcomes.

- 5.48. The team has also provided mutual aid to London, Suffolk and been at the centre of all in force POPs deployments.

### **Search**

- 5.49. The team has 1 x Police Search Coordinator. The remaining 9 POLSAs (Police Search Advisors) all hold full-time posts across the Force and cover this voluntary role on a 24/7 basis. Over the reporting period they have given advice 376 times and deployed 81 times.
- 5.50. In October 2023 there was an LSO course introducing 23 new LSOs to the Force and a Team Leader course in January 2024 training 5 new team leaders. We continue to have CPDs and refresher training to ensure knowledge it kept up to date and relevant to best service the Force.

### **Dogs**

- 5.51. The Dog Section attended 3,101 incidents between July and December 2023, a slight increase on the 2883 shown in the previous review period. This has placed unavoidable pressure on allocated budgets. The force has also seen a further increase in dangerous dog incidents since the change in legislation concerning the XL Bully breed. The force anticipates sustained pressure on the dangerous dog budget through 24/25 as a result of this change.
- 5.52. The number of arrests is consistent with the previous review period at 73 (from 74 last period) and the team remains proactive in relation to stop searches and intelligence submissions with PIRS stable at 165, against 169, and stop and searches up at 144 compared to 81 previously.
- 5.53. There was a total of 319 requests through Ops Planning for dog support in this 6 month reporting period, of this, the team supported 300 of those requests. These are planned deployments and do not take into account spontaneous incidents and business as usual. The team often relies on voluntary shift adjustments to facilitate these requests.
- 5.54. There were 1677 dangerous dog incidents reported in the whole of 2023, up from 1431 in 2022. 866 have already been reported between July and December. There have been 241 dogs seized in this reporting period, which is significantly higher than the last period where only 80 were seized.
- 5.55. Engagement through the Dog Section Twitter account has grown to 10.9k followers from 10.8k last year and continues to attract good public interest with positive interactions. The section takes part in numerous engagement events with the community and partners, conducting displays, demonstrating the capability of the team.

**Force Support Unit**

- 5.56. The FSU continues to provide the service level agreement as dictated by the Armed Policing Strategic Risk Assessment (APSTRA). Currently this is the provision of 5 ARV vehicles 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year.
- 5.57. From July 2023 to December 2023, the FSU undertook 371 firearms deployments to spontaneous incidents and 88 planned deployments.
- 5.58. When not deployed on firearm incidents, the FSU make a significant contribution to Operation Grip, the force’s hotspot policing initiative to reduce serious violence, with 1457 deployments from July to December 2023. This aligns a highly trained and experienced proactive resource, with the parts of the county most likely to experience knife crime and other violent offences. In addition, the FSU is tasked to support the arrest of individuals wanted for High Harm offences, working closely with the OSG and Dog Section to locate and detain those most likely to cause further harm.

Taser Tasking	Make Safe	Medical Assistance	Method of Entry
211	230	69	77
Total Spontaneous Deployment	Deer Dispatch within Spontaneous	Planned Deployments	Total Deployments
283	114	88	371
Recce	High Harm Arrests	Other Arrests	Total Arrests
50	42	51	93

**Weapons Training**

- 5.59. Weapons Training complete all Mandatory Refresher Training for all armed officers across the force. All Armed Response Vehicle Officers (ARVOs) are required to complete 20 mandatory training days during the training calendar year to maintain their role profile. This is in addition to any separate mandatory training requirements for specialist firearms roles (i.e. Rifle, Close Protection and Mobile Support to Surveillance) which all have set training hours and packages to maintain competence. Training requirements have been met over the reporting period.
- 5.60. An Initial Firearms Course commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, which will run for a 14 week period, with those officers successful achieving the role profile of ARVO.
- 5.61. All firearms command roles have mandatory contact hours that must be achieved during each training year to maintain occupational competence. The most recent training over the reporting period saw JESIP commanders brought together at Kelvedon Park to consider the response to a marauding terrorist attack, applying the learning and recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

**Stansted Airport**

- 5.62. Between July 2023 and December 2023, there were 3568 incidents reported and a further 194 attended outside the Security Vigilance Area. Passenger numbers are high and continue to grow into the summer period reaching 97,000 on peak days in July and August. December saw the third busiest period in the airport’s history surpassing summer numbers.
- 5.63. The increase in the establishment in the Community Policing Team has enabled a shift towards community policing rather than just a Counter Terrorism security response. This has allowed an increase in Operation Servitor deployments, increased operations to recover criminal cash being taken out of the country, further focus on VAWG and safeguarding operations to identify vulnerable women and children being exploited.
- 5.64. The development of the northside of the airport with land being sold to a private company for development has led to significant changes to our Ground Response Plans (GRP); this is our response to aircraft in distress and potential hijack. This culminated in the largest Hijack exercise in the past 5 years being held in February 2024 with 450 participants from all our partners and blue light services.
- 5.65. Airport Policing is preventing business crime by improving the patrol strategy and working closely with the business crime team and World Duty Free. The Community Policing Team utilises all systems available within the environment to prevent and detect crime and work with identified SPOCS from retail and hotel businesses.
- 5.66. The following data reflects some of the airport demand July 2023 – December 2023:

	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Op Vincula – High Harm Wanted</b>	11	14	11	8	9	6
<b>Eborders Concern</b>	84	88	71	54	41	50
<b>Eborders Wanted</b>	160	138	169	220	165	130
<b>Op British-HMG</b>	9	0	5	2	4	6
<b>Op Hurricane - VIP</b>	3	6	3	3	12	2
<b>Full Emergency</b>	1	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Cash Inc</b>	31	23	31	41	29	39
<b>Off Airport - Attendance</b>	32	40	27	20	29	46
<b>Drone - Incursion</b>	2	1	0	1	2	1
<b>Ground Response Inc</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0

## **Firearms Shotguns Explosive Licensing (FSEL)**

- 5.67. Essex FSEL manages all aspects of the licensing process of firearms and explosives for the (approx.) 24,000 firearms and shotgun certificate holders in Essex. FSEL performance has recently been reported to the PR&S board.
- 5.68. FSEL service delivery is recognised as being amongst some of the best in the country with the average waiting for an application to be processed being 30 days. Hampshire force has approached FSEL and request the sharing of best practice to improve their service performance.
- 5.69. The gap between the fees payable to obtain/renew firearms and shotgun licenses and the force's administrative and processing costs remain significant, with Essex Police effectively subsidising applications. The fees payable are set by legislation and are subject to review by the Home Office. An increase in fees is expected, but may be delayed by other government priorities.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

### **Serious Violence Unit**

- 6.1. The success of the SVU is partly due to the significant funding that it receives each year by the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC). In 2021 the team received more than £450k, and in 2022 a further £370k. This funding allows for the team's proactive approach in identifying and dismantling County Lines.
- 6.2. NCLCC funding significantly reduced in the 24/25 financial year, dropping to less than £100k. This has resulted in a change of working practices for the team to ensure that we are able to work within financial constraints. Further reductions in NCLCC funding are anticipated and the team will need to adjust working practices to ensure performance against the highest threat drug lines is unaffected.
- 6.3. Last year's Post Implementation Review of SVU recommended a third Op Raptor Detective Inspector be appointed, to improve capacity and capability in managing drug line investigations and the associated risk. Funding for this role has not been identified for 24/25. The implications for staff welfare, investigation progression and recruitment remain.
- 6.4. The development of County Line criminality in the on-line space will continue to be a challenge for the SVU in identifying those that are exploiting the vulnerable. While other forces have introduced a dedicated function to tackle this growing area of criminality, the SVU is trying to use existing structures and establishment to develop its own strategy. This will limit the ability to be proactive and effective in this space.

### **Roads Policing**

- 6.5. Recruitment of police staff continues to be challenging within the Roads Policing back-office support service teams, culminating in the use of police officers being used to fulfil key functions to enable the processing and prosecution of minor traffic offences. Such challenges primarily result from the time taken for new police staff

members to clear corporate vetting checks, prior to being offered employment. Delays are taking up to 9 months.

- 6.6. The inability to recruit police staff in a timely manner is having a negative impact upon staff morale, business processes, victim contact and capacity to bring offenders to justice. Using police officers on overtime to complete back-office processes is also putting pressure on financial budgets.
- 6.7. Slow progress on the provision of new I.T systems within the Roads Policing back office has delayed opportunities to improve efficiency in relation to public contact and justice for offenders. This area has now been assigned a project manager and support through DTOB, so should realise improvement by the end of this calendar year.
- 6.8. The fleet challenges in terms of appropriate vehicles for Roads Policing continue. The past 6 months have identified regular mechanical reliability issues, reducing day to day operational availability of fleet by up to 60%. The command continues to work closely with Transport Services to mitigate the issues and identify other suitable vehicles. This mechanical challenges are exacerbated by high levels of damage to fleet vehicles, sustained during incidents involving police contact, particular with the current focus on organised vehicle crime and increased number of pursuits arising.
- 6.9. The impending works on the A12 between Boreham and Stanway are likely to slow response times from Boreham to the north of the county. Mitigation for roads policing is in place through the impending hub at Thorpe and a hot-desking facility provided by National Highways on the Colchester side of the works.

### **Operational Planning**

- 6.10. The current shortfall of trained Level 2 and 3 officers has presented challenges in being able to effectively meet the deployment requirements for Public Order Public Safety operations, whilst maintaining frontline services without incurring costs relating to mutual aid and overtime.
- 6.11. Training Level 2 Public Order officers continues to be challenged by the procurement and supply of the necessary equipment and also a limited availability of training venues nationally. Essex Police (and other forces) have been impacted by the withdrawal of the MOD training estate to conduct suitable L2 training in line with national standards. Due to the lack of a dedicated training site in Essex or the Eastern Region this has resulted in moving to more expensive options with police forces further afield to meet the training requirements to maintain appropriately trained staff.

### **Resource Management Unit (RMU)**

- 6.12. A Continuous Improvement Team review of the department identified that the current system used for the recording of officer and staff duties (SAP) does not sufficiently support the efficient and effective administration of duties and that alternatives should be considered. In the meantime, the department continues to work with the system trying to extract the maximum capability from it. A new duties management

system is being procured to support Contact Management Command and this may identify opportunities for wider adoption across other functions or the wider force.

- 6.13. Personal Safety training has been extended to a 3-day course which places a greater demand on the RMU in terms of planning to ensure the teams that officers are abstracted from still have sufficient numbers. Despite this, course population is going well, with circa 3,000 officers assigned their dates for the coming year.

### **Resilience Department**

- 6.14. Due to recent staff turnover, the team of just four personnel is running with a vacancy in the Business Continuity post. An external candidate was selected in October 2023 and awaits a formal job offer, following vetting. This vacancy means that some facets of the department's work is delayed as the Resilience Manager prioritises workstreams based on a risk. The team is currently prioritising updating Business Continuity plans in lieu of the post-holder taking up the role.

### **Marine**

- 6.15. The force is procuring a new cabined RHIB. There have been minor issues identified with the new vessel's hull design, which have since been rectified. The vessel is now expected to be delivered in summer 2024; this may impact on the ability to provide coverage on the water during the key periods.

### **Search**

- 6.16. The team is currently 3 under STRA for Police Search Advisors (PoSAs). Due to an increase in workload a review of the STRA is underway. In 2017 the team were tasked with 403 incidents for the year, for 2023 they supported 977 incidents, suggesting an increase to current numbers will be required.
- 6.17. The Force does not have a permanent search team. 136 officers are trained as Licenced Search Officers and the PoSAs work across the Force in numerous full-time roles across the force. Officers who do not work on OPC are finding it more difficult to get abstracted to support searches.

### **Dogs**

- 6.18. The dangerous dog kennels are at critical levels with limited capability to seize further dogs due to the number that have been seized and the length of time the investigations are taking to get to court. This court situation is slowly improving as the backlogs clear. Options for further outsourcing are being looked at, but this is a national issue and kennel space across the country is very limited.
- 6.19. The rising kennel costs continue to be a challenge. This is a national challenge and is directly related to the demand in this area. The ban on XL Bully Dogs will see a significant rise in demand in this area going forwards.
- 6.20. The annual budget for dangerous dogs was exceeded again by a considerable margin. The prediction for this year puts the dangerous dog budget spend at



approximately £450k against a budget of £260k – this expenditure is outside of our control and is an unavoidable cost. The force has received notice that kennelling fees will be going up next year. The increased expense continues to be offset by the repayment of kennel costs at the point of conviction. This is normally partial recompense, but last year amounted to £35k (approx.). Work has been done with the CPS who now pay for their own dangerous dog exams.

- 6.21. There are currently only 2 members of kennel staff who provide care to police dogs when housed on site. Handlers are regularly utilised to cover staffing gaps, and this impacts our operational capability. The force is running a recruitment process to replace a member of staff who resigned. The post attracts a very low pay scale (scale 2) which has been recently reviewed and confirmed. This is a barrier to recruiting suitable individuals. Alternative kennel and staffing options are being explored.

### **FSU**

- 6.22. The FSU is currently understaffed with 14 vacancies. The force is able to achieve the APSTRA minimums on a daily basis with use of overtime, but this comes at considerable cost and is likely to exceed budget allocations in 24/25. To mitigate against this, we have incorporated a second Initial Firearms Course (IFC) to increase numbers. With the exacting standards required there is a high failure rate on this course and even with full courses we are unlikely to achieve full staffing numbers before 2025.
- 6.23. Op Vertu is the national response to the court case of the Metropolitan Police Officer who shot and killed Chris KABA. The officer known as NX121 has been charged with murder and following a request from several national news outlets his anonymity will be removed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This has caused considerable concern for firearms officers across the country including Essex. The Chief Constable has led the reassurance work with the firearms teams, and this continues.

### **Taser Capability**

- 6.24. Following a recent review, the number of Specially Trained Officers (STOs) trained and deployed with Taser in the force has been reduced to 700. This figure does not include Authorised Firearms Officers. Whilst this is a small reduction in those trained, it does not reduce our overall capability to respond to threats within the county and falls in-line with other similar force numbers. This is being supported by a wider review of the STO establishment to ensure the right number of officers are trained in the front-line response roles to maintain operational availability.
- 6.25. The number of Taser devices is being reduced from 319 to 275 which is reflected by the ratio of one device to every four STOs, from the previous one in every three. Again, this is part of a wider operational review to ensure the taser numbers in individual armouries are being maximised and re-balanced where required. The reduction in devices is not expected to reduce operational availability.

## **Stansted**

- 6.26. Manchester Airport Group (MAG) has confirmed plans to increase their passenger numbers to 43 million over the next 5 years (from 28 million passengers in 2023). This is likely to bring a significant growth in calls for service at the airport. In 2024 it is estimated that passenger numbers will grow by 1 million. The growth of the Community Policing Team will mitigate the increase in crime and disorder, providing a greater unarmed presence at the airport and increased opportunity for community engagement and crime prevention initiatives.

## **FSEL**

- 6.27. The current IT system – CYCLOPS - is coming to the end of its working life and will be replaced with a cloud-based alternative. FSEL has over 20,000 records that will need to migrate to whichever new system replaces CYCLOPS. A number of options are being reviewed, including within Office 365.

## **7.0. Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

### **Further investment in crime prevention**

- 7.1. The SVU has continued to focus on partnership engagement through the PPP team and targeting diversion opportunities for those involved in serious violence.
- 7.2. The PPP team has worked closely with the PFCCs Joint Education Team throughout 2023, ensuring that we have consistent education inputs delivered in areas of need across the county. This is supported by some of the bespoke work that has been delivered by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU), which has delivered theatre productions within some Essex schools.
- 7.3. The PPP team has continued to deliver Op Bumble, a joint operation with partners to provide the public, and companies, with information and training around identifying the signs of exploitation.
- 7.4. Op Grip is now into its second year of the pilot, which is delivering on a problem orientated policing approach, identifying locations within Op Grip zones that cause high levels of serious violence, then working with partners to implement strategies to prevent crime. The FSU makes a sustained and significant contribution to Op Grip patrols.
- 7.5. Through intelligence development and the growth of community policing, Stansted CPT is completing more targeted operations such as Op Servitor and has increased capacity for community engagement and prevention activity.

### **Reducing drug driven violence**

- 7.6. The SVU is Essex Police's primary response to reducing drug driven violence. As detailed within this report, the SVU works to identify, disrupt and dismantle those gangs and groups that operate using the county lines model, and who exploit the

vulnerable. By targeting county lines and the associated criminality, we are reducing drug driven violence.

- 7.7. A number of uniform operations teams support the work of SVU and local community policing teams in their enforcement against violent drug dealers by resourcing search warrants, providing method of entry and assisting with prisoner handling and conveyance.

### **Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse**

- 7.8. OPC plays a key role in supporting Local Policing Areas and Crime & Public Protection in the arrest of persons wanted for domestic abuse offences and other high harm crimes.
- 7.9. The dog section's digital detection has a significant impact on those utilising technology for cybercrime or sexual offences against women and children.
- 7.10. Stansted CPT conducts proactive operations to identify vulnerable people within the VAWG/FGM work strands. It conducts E-Border arrests of high harm perpetrators and intelligence collection, building links with taxis and hotels.
- 7.11. FSEL maintains effective processes to ensure that only suitable persons have access to firearms. The force has good systems in place to identify where firearms and shotgun licence holders are involved in domestic abuse incidents and to quickly review those cases, recovering firearms and revoking licences where appropriate.

### **Reducing violence against women and girls**

- 7.12. The Op Grip team works closely with local authorities and partner agencies to identify how it can support the prevention of serious violence, which includes violence against woman and girls. The team has recently conducted some work at Essex University to ensure that women and girls feel safe at night, particularly focusing on night-time establishments and preventing drink spiking, and feelings of vulnerability within taxis.

### **Improving support for victims of crime**

- 7.13. OPC has implemented a local Investigations Improvement Board, which is designed to ensure that the command is focused on delivering the best possible service to victims of crime. The board focuses on key performance data to ensure that our service to victims is consistent across the command.
- 7.14. The PPP team has implemented bespoke safeguarding measures that ensures that victims are identified and are the focus of enforcement activity and subsequent investigations connected to County Lines. These processes have been identified as best practice and have been adopted by other regional forces.

### **Increasing collaboration**

- 7.15. The Op Grip team collaborates with partners and internal teams to try and reduce serious violence across the county. This is evidenced in the Safe Space initiatives where the team has engaged with the local authority and delivered bespoke operations designed to reduce serious violence and increase public confidence. The work of the PPP team collaborates with partners to ensure we are safeguarding the vulnerable and to assist in crime prevention.
- 7.16. Operational planning engages in all Safety Advisory Groups with local authorities, blue light services and event organisers. This ensures a consistent approach to the management of Public Safety events within Essex and that organisers and other stakeholders are challenged and held accountable for their obligations to deliver safe events for the communities of Essex.
- 7.17. The Marine Unit has close links with the various partner agencies in Essex, including the Kent and Essex Inshore Fishers Conservation Authority, Border Force, HM Coastguard and the local Harbour authorities such as Harwich Haven and the Port of London. It has also built good links with the locally based Royal Navy vessel HMS Trumpeter and her crew. Joint patrols and training are conducted with these agencies throughout the year.
- 7.18. Weapons Training are a key partner in the 7 Force collaboration, developing training programmes and providing key specialist training.

### **Improving safety on our roads**

- 7.19. Essex Police Road Policing teams lead on prevention and enforcement activity as part of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership. The force leads on delivery of 'Activity A' with targeted Vision Zero enforcement initiatives across the force to reduce KSIs. The force is also a key partner in 'Activity B' initiatives to educate key user groups on road safety and safe driver behaviour.

### **Preventing business crime, fraud and cybercrime**

- 7.20. Stansted community policing team working closely with the Business Crime team are providing prevention advice to companies such as World Duty Free. The use of intelligence development has led to the identification of Organised Crime Groups using airports to commit shop lifting thefts, this includes the arrest at Gatwick of a male who committed over £50,000 of theft across numerous airports in the UK.

### **Encouraging volunteers and community support**

- 7.21. The Special Constabulary continues to provide outstanding support to OPC teams (OSG, Dogs, RPU and Stansted CPT) and to support bespoke policing operations, such as the King's visit to Colchester, facilitated through Operational Planning. The command continues to work with Specials to develop attractive volunteering opportunities, including a new initiative to support Weapons Training by participating as role players.

## **8.0. Demand**

- 8.1. The following are identified as areas of increased demand for OPC, over and above those set out in our annual report.

### **Roads Policing**

- 8.2. The demand for Roads Policing is expected to rise over the short to medium term, recognising the continued growth and development of the Force area, especially expansion to road networks. The anticipated upgrade to the A12, will present challenges in responding to calls for service, as road networks subject to works, always generates additional road traffic collisions, especially where vehicles merge.

### **RMU and Operational Planning**

- 8.3. The next 6 months will see an increase in the number of pre-planned operations which RMU resource and OPC contribute officers to. These include operations in response to summer demand, August bank holiday events, Remembrance services, Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas. This year will also see the first summer international football tournament since 2021, which will be supported by a specific policing operation. In addition, it is anticipated there will be further demand for mutual aid requests to London, Somerset (Stonehenge), Suffolk (Sizewell and RAF Lakenheath) and a policing plan to support a General Election.

### **VIP Movements**

- 8.4. The last 18 months have seen an increase in Tier 1 VIP movements through Stansted Airport (namely USA, Ukraine and China). Given world events it is likely that we will continue to see an increased number of these visits, presenting a resourcing and financial challenge to the force. Discussions with the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are ongoing in relation to funding of these operations.

### **Dogs**

- 8.5. There has been a large increase in dangerous dogs' demand primarily relating to XL Bullies. This places pressure on the limited number of DLOs to support the calls to service and subsequent investigations.

## **9.0 Risks/Mitigation**

### **Serious Violence Unit**

- 9.1. The decrease in NCLCC funding creates a risk that the force will have reduced capacity to take enforcement action against identified drug lines. A change in working practices to ensure that we prioritise risk and harm, means there will be less street enforcement activity, but will have a greater impact on harm and give greater control over spending. The reduction in funding has also been mitigated by an additional £70,000 allocation from the Drug Forfeiture Fund.

## **Roads Policing**

- 9.2. The Force risk register includes measures mitigating risks to officers and staff when responding to incidents on “fast roads”. Fast roads are defined as roads with more than a 40mph speed limit. The risk score sits at 60. Following several near miss incidents, the force has provided, and implemented, a comprehensive review of Emergency Traffic Management equipment and officer / staff training and has systems in place to make sure officers are checking vehicle equipment and maintaining the necessary accreditations.
- 9.3. The force has an identified risk in relation to management of pursuits. There is a risk that a lack of appropriately trained commanders, advisors and drivers could lead to missed opportunities to apprehend criminals (i.e. pursuit is not authorised), or that lack of command training and/or use of lesser trained officers (e.g. armed pursuit) could result in pursuits that conclude in death or serious injury. There are 10 identified mitigating actions, covering training, procedure, record keeping and review, and vehicles.

## **Operational Planning**

- 9.4. The challenges to training the required number of Level 2 public order officers continues, exacerbated by the lack of suitable training venues within the Eastern Region forces. This is reflected on the risk register with a score of 45. Beds/Cambs/Herts have plans drawn for their own training venue, but this is not expected to be online until at least 2026. Essex Police is currently using a training facility in Sussex. The cost of this is considerably more than using MOD venues which Essex Police did previously. The Sussex venue has been booked up until March 2025. It is hoped that MOD properties will be back online by then. Other forces’ venues are also being explored for use.
- 9.5. The command manages a recorded risk in relation to implementation of the Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI) recommendations and the linked requirements to further embed JESIP across the force. Significant progress has been made against the MAI recommendations and with blue light partners in developing shared plans. A JESIP assurance visit in this reporting period confirmed that the force has good procedures in place and appropriate understanding across commanders, but recommended further work to embed with frontline staff. This is being progressed through the Collaboration Chief Inspector and Head of Armed Policing.

## **RMU**

- 9.6. Scheduling sufficient officers on annual PPST refreshers has been challenging, due to a lack of capacity in RMU to book courses. The course will move to 3 days (current 2) from April, giving less capacity for individual courses and requiring higher course occupancy rates. This presents a risk to allocating training within the annual accreditation. Additional capacity has been sought and a new process for allocating courses post 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 has been introduced.

## Dogs

- 9.7. A lack of substantive Sergeants presents a risk to effective operational supervision and training. There are 2 operational Sergeants managing 4 shifts. One of those is a Temporary Sergeant. A recent recruitment process was unsuccessful due to the quality of candidates applying. Recent incidents have highlighted the need for effective cover, which is not possible with the number of Sergeants allocated to the Dog Section. Supervision relies on goodwill and Sergeants taking numerous calls whilst off duty – some of which result in them returning to work to manage issues. The Training Sergeant is due to receive his promotion posting to Inspector shortly and this will remove the only other substantive Sergeant from the section, with a resulting impact on training. This position has some significant challenges to fill it due to the requirements of the role and limited suitable candidates. Internal and external recruitment opportunities are being explored at pace in order to fill the vacancies.

## Armed Policing

- 9.8. Op Vertu – The impending removal of NX121's anonymity presents a risk to the recruitment and retention of armed officers. Locally and nationally, armed officers fear being left vulnerable and unsupported in the event of a police shooting and question whether a career as a firearms officer is right for them and their families. The force has not seen current firearms officers immediately step away from their role, but has seen a reduction in the number of new applications and an increase in the number of current AFOs seeking promotion. Locally the risk of a reduced firearms capability has been mitigated by personal engagement of Chief Officers with armed teams; media briefings; information on the support and protections available and the national work on the Home Office's Accountability Review.
- 9.9. The resilience of the Force Support Unit remains an identified risk on the Risk Register. Financial incentives to move to other forces such as the City of London and the Metropolitan Police are impacting the Force's ability to retain specialist officers within Weapons Training and FSU. To support recruitment of new firearms officers, OPC is developing a programme to better prepare and support officers to gain the evidence required for a career in armed policing and in their initial firearms assessment. This will include assistance with fitness, applications and development of proactive policing skills.
- 9.10. Recruitment and retention of National Firearms Instructors remains a risk, with 5 current NFI vacancies on a team of 20. This reflects a national challenge to recruit to the role. NFI must be experienced firearms officers who are also suited to teaching and training others, presenting a small candidate pool. Mitigation for the vacancies will see a change in the shift pattern to increase training days by 52 days a year. This will see the team split into 2 shifts so allowing for a better spread of the instructors and improving capacity. In addition, to support recruitment and retention each NFI post also attracts a Targeted Variable Payment of £3,000 to mitigate against the loss of income vs those in 24/7 operational roles; a significant hindrance factor in recruitment to the NFI role.

- 9.11. Firearms range provision remains a recorded risk for the command. The current 25m range is not sufficient for College of Policing mandated training and external venues carry both financial and opportunity costs. A project team has been established to explore collaborative opportunities with Kent and scope other long-term options.

### **Driving**

- 9.12. The command manages a risk in relation to driving authorities and the linked impact on capability to deploy effectively. Significant progress has been made in the provision of response and advanced courses, resulting in a reduction in the risk score. Additional TPAC driver training is required for the risk to reach its target score.

## **10.0 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

### **Protest**

- 10.1 Nationally policing has seen the introduction of new legislation regarding offences relating to protest causing significant disruption under the Public Order Act 2023. This legislation has yet to be tested in the courts, but command training has described the expected tests a court will apply in relation to provisions under the Human Right Act and how those considerations should be applied operationally.
- 10.2 Essex Police has prosecuted several individuals under the recently introduced Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 relating to Just Stop Oil protest activity which has attracted significant custodial sentences. Public Order Public Safety policing is always a balance of an individual's human rights to protest and express their views, overlaid with the impact of the wider community's rights. Any impact on human rights is considered by commanders who have been appropriately trained to make such decisions.
- 10.3 Protest activity has seen an increase nationally with Essex continuing to face protest surrounding local issues such as the Wethersfield Asylum Accommodation Centre, protest against cost of living, picket lines from unions etc. Essex Police has effective processes for identifying protest, engaging with organisers, and managing these proportionately in line with individual human rights.

## **11.0 Health and Safety Implications**

### **Roads Policing**

- 11.1 As described at paragraph 9.3. the police response to fast roads, has been identified as a Force risk, following examples of near misses, and shortfalls in the Emergency Traffic Management equipment carried in local policing response vehicles. This is managed through a Gold Group chaired by the Head of OPC, and significant progress has been made in mitigating the risks identified.



## **Football Policing**

- 11.2 National working groups have identified concerns surrounding officers' protection at football matches due to an increase in missiles being thrown. We have had no reported injuries from such activity within Essex and are linked into national working groups to review equipment issued to officers for protection during events.

## **12.0 Consultation/Engagement**

- 12.1. This report has been developed through extensive internal consultation and consultation with command leads. Wider consultation has not been required in this case.

## **13.0 Actions for Improvement**

- 13.1. In addition to actions described under previous sections above, the following have been identified as areas for improvement in the Operational Policing Command.

### **RMU**

- 13.2. Work has been undertaken to improve the accuracy of the flex balance quotas held by officers and staff on Local Policing or Custody teams. A working party has been convened led by RMU with the SAP IT Team, Business Centre and HR reviewing each aspect and process.

### **Dogs**

- 13.3. A Dog Section Regional STRA is being created to identify what is needed in terms of staffing and training provision to provide effective operational cover and resilience. The intended delivery of the new shift pattern was delayed and is now being reconsidered. The original option did not increase resilience, but does put the handlers on duty at the time where our demand is higher.

### **Taser Governance**

- 13.4. In the last 6 months the command has led on scoping to identify a potential replacement for the X2 Taser device and has considered the appropriate distribution of STOs and devices. This has identified areas for improvement in the ongoing governance of Taser and STOs, to ensure that the deployment of Taser is consistent with strategic intentions and that review and revocation processes are suitably clear and robust. The FSU Chief Inspector is leading on establishing the new processes, linking in with L&D (who deliver training and administration functions) and the new Chief Taser Instructor for the 7 Force collaboration.

### **Public Order Training**

- 13.5. Essex is not currently meeting the required number of Level 3 Public Order Trained officers, due to staff movement and a number of previously trained officers relinquishing the skill. A plan has been developed to increase this which will see all officers within Community Policing Teams being trained as part of their role

requirement. This is underway with 5 sessions completed and another 14 planned and resourced over the next two months.

## **CBRN**

- 13.6. OSG currently has a shortfall of 10 CBRN trained officers with a current establishment of 62, this is due to staff turnover, recruitment timescales, and the availability of PPE and classrooms that are required to deliver the courses. A number of actions are being implemented to address this:
- Increased number of General and Enhanced Responders above mandated levels. Two Basic courses have been booked for March and April 2024.
  - Develop and deliver a three-week Duty Officer/Advanced Responder course as part of the department's succession planning.
  - Deliver additional ARVO initial courses to increase ARVO Officer Cadre.
  - Deliver on and participate in the Regional Advanced DIM Operator course being delivered by the National CBRN Centre.
  - Continue to develop remote viewing for Gas Detection capability.
  - Develop Police Response plan for Stansted Airport and look to deliver T&E in 2025.

## **14.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

### **Code of Ethics Implementation**

- 14.1. The newly revised Code of Ethics affords the command an opportunity to refresh and relaunch messaging in relation to the expected values and behaviours. The command is a member of the implementation board and has already started the dissemination and cascading of key messages relating to the new ethical policing principles. The command has already engaged with the Prevent and Protect Team in PSD for inputs to the leadership team and culture board and further engagement at team level will be promoted. A system of contextual cascade briefings has been put in place, culminating in supervisors discussing the Professionalism Strategy and Code of Ethics in the operating context of their teams, bringing those documents to life for individuals.
- 14.2. The command is being supported by the Head of Professionalism and Positive Action team in separate pieces of survey-led work to better understand the perceptions and experiences of OPC and how we can improve.

### **Serious Violence Unit**

- 14.3. The implementation of the Knife Crime and Violence Model, an algorithm using police data that identifies those that are at risk of committing knife crime and serious violence, will be implemented in Southend in the first quarter of the 24/25 financial year and thereafter to other priority areas over the next 12-24 months (Basildon, Colchester, Chelmsford). This staged approach will test the capacity and effectiveness of the approach, before rolling out to subsequent areas. This is a continuance of a previous pilot which saw a reduction in offending of those engaged with. The effective expansion of KCVM has the support of the Violence and

Vulnerability Unit, that continues to work with police on the project. Continued support from the office of the PFCC, VVU and Safer Essex is key to achieving the expected crime prevention outcomes. The pilot will see engagement from partner agencies including probation, Re-Route and the Local Authority.

- 14.4. This year will see development of diversionary work with the Ben Kinsella trust, where work is ongoing through the support of the VVU, to provide diversionary opportunities to those that are involved in serious violent crime, including knife crime. It is anticipated that this will reduce reoffending for those involved in knife crime.

### **Roads Policing**

- 14.5. Utilising Home Office funding supporting efforts to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour on the roads, Roads Policing have developed a programme of operational activity across 30+ communities, focusing upon the enforcement of speed limits. In addition, a dedicated policing response will be provided across 3 locations, all frequently impacted upon by “car cruise events”. This will include Canvey Island, Harlow, and Thurrock.
- 14.6. Whilst this operation will look to improve road safety for all road users, including those most vulnerable, every effort is being made to maximise public engagement and ensure each community is aware of policing activity, and its impact upon road user behaviour.
- 14.7. Adopting the Home Office model of “clear, hold and build”, in tackling violence, the model will be adopted to improve road safety. Intensified policing activity, is planned over a 5-week period, directed towards high harm traffic offences, anti-social road use, and methods to enhance public confidence around road safety messages.

### **Operational Planning**

- 14.8. The Operations Centre is conducting a project in relation to the command, logistical support and planning of POPS events. The team is developing an extensive knowledge bank containing practical guides, useful links and best practice that will support commander and planners in bringing together operations. From the point that a POPS structure is required, the knowledge bank will provide a step-by-step guide, ensuring consistency and standards across all commanders and command roles. The product is intended to adapt to changing trends and ensure organisational learning is incorporated.

### **RMU**

- 14.9. Further to the strategic change review of RMU mentioned earlier, a number of recommendations for improvement in streamlining processes and reducing demand have been reviewed and agreed at the OPC Strategic Board. These include:
- Increased autonomy for SAP updates being given to local line managers
  - New processes for creation and implementation of on call rotas
  - New process to batch upload information on to SAP
  - Creation of analytical staffing level reports

- New processes for planning officers to PST training
- Introduction of service levels agreements
- Reorganisation of RMU staff

### **Drones**

14.10. A new system to record 'Blues' and Flight Hours (administration on how flights are recorded) is anticipated in 2024. This will replace the paper blues, which is the current system, along with the flight hour logs on Google sheets. The risk assessment will instead be done on a phone and is expected to be a lot quicker and simpler. This is being developed by a leading Drone and CAA expert in Norfolk.

### **Marine**

14.11. The previous police launch 'Alert' is currently for sale through a local yacht broker. The contract to replace her has been awarded to a boat builder based in Scotland (Ultimate Boats) who have recently been making vessels for other Police Forces as well as the MOD. It is anticipated that the new vessel will be delivered for service by summer 2024.